

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated 26 April 2005, Applicant offers the following amendment and remarks. Reconsideration and reevaluation of the application, as amended, is
5 respectfully requested.

At page 2 and 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1 through 5, 12 through 21, 28 through 31, 37 and 38 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. 6,394,201 to Feigel, Jr. et al. Applicant respectfully submits that Feigel does not teach a bowl
10 insert configured to fit into a rotary table on a rig. Feigel teaches the use of a "tubing spider" (see column 1, lines 14 et seq.). Additionally, Feigel does not teach having multiple inserts per individual slip. For instance, see figure 6 of Feigel, and in particular the gripping die 26 (see column 3, lines 53 et seq.).

15 Feigel, Jr. et al. teaches away from Applicant's present invention. For instance, at column 4, lines 65 et seq., Feigel states:

The long range of travel of the slips (14) also allows the spider (10) to be configured with narrow angle wedges. Generally, the narrower the angle (closer to vertical), the greater lateral or radial force may be applied through the slips.

20 Therefore, by giving the slips a greater range of travel, the entire range of which is enclosed by the support frame, the spider may have a greater ability to grip the pipe while maintaining the range of slip opening (16) to accommodate drill collars or wider diameter pipe. Therefore, in a preferred embodiment, the wedges present an inclined plane which is a 13 degrees angle from vertical. This angle

may vary from 8 degrees to about 20 degrees and the frame dimensions may be varied to provide the necessary size range of slip opening (16).

This clearly shows that Feigel teaches minimum angles relative to vertical. The language of having 8 degrees to about 20 degrees is simply to accommodate large OD tubulars such as drill collars. The range of travel design of Feigel allows for a variable size opening 16. Applicant's invention teaches use of larger angles, relative to vertical. As noted at page 20, lines 21 et seq. of Applicant's Specification:

According to the teachings of this invention, the outer portion of the slip in one embodiment may have a taper of greater than 11 degrees; in one preferred embodiment, the taper is between 11 degrees and 15 degrees; and in the most preferred embodiment, the taper is 12 degrees (as denoted by "A"). It should be noted that the 15 degree taper is denoted by "X".

Additionally, Applicant respectfully submits that Feigel does not teach having shoulders on the inserts that are capable of transferring a load from the shoulders to the ledges in order to distribute the load along the entire length of the first slip, second slip, and third slip. Feigel distributes the load at the bottom of the slip, which is the thinnest section, and hence more susceptible to failure -- a common problem with prior art designs. Please note that no new matter was added. For instance, please see page 18 lines 4 et seq., page 19 lines 10 et seq., as well as Figures 7A, 12, and 8 of Applicant's Specification.

Additionally, the Examiner rejected claims 22 through 27 and 32 through 36 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Feigel, Jr. et al. in view of U. S. 2, 607,098. Wilson clearly does not disclose nor teach multiple inserts on a single slip. As set out in column 4, lines

33 et seq., as well as Figures 5 and 6 of Wilson, the insert is one continuous piece. Further, as set out in column 4, line 36 of Wilson, the outer face of the jaw 24 is provided with alternate notches and ribs generally designated at 26 to interfit with a complementary notched portion 27 formed on the inner face of each slip element 17, 18 to maintain the parts in proper relation with each other as illustrated in Figure 7. Therefore, it is clear from the '098 reference that the notches/ribs 26 and complementary notches 27 are formed for inner connection purposes only. Applicant respectfully submits that this arrangement cannot distribute the load caused by the tubular members along the body of the slip. In other words, neither the Wilson reference nor the Feigel reference teach that the shoulders of multiple inserts are capable of transferring the load from the shoulders to the ledges.

Wilson's inability to distribute the load about the length of the slips results in point loading the slip at the toe; i.e., all the load of Wilson is going to be concentrated at one point. As noted in Applicant's Specification at page 17, line 22, in prior art devices, the bottom section would deflect and/or bend outward as denoted by arrow "A" in Figure 7A; this is known as toeing.

Applicant notes that independent claims 1, 12, 21, 29, and 37 have been amended. Applicant respectfully submits that with reference to the obviousness rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), there must be a basis in the art for combining or modifying references. As set out in the MPEP § 2143.01, the mere fact that a reference can be combined or modified, does not render the resultant combination obvious unless the prior art also suggest the desirability of the combination. Most, if not all inventions arise from a combination of old elements. Thus, every element of the claimed invention may often be found in the prior art. However, identification in the prior art of each individual part claimed is insufficient to defeat patentability of the whole

claimed invention. Rather, to establish obviousness based on a combination of the elements disclosed in the prior art, there must be some motivation, suggestion, or teaching of the desirability of making the specification combination that was made by the Applicant (see In re. Kotzab, 217 F.3d 1365, 55 USPQ 2d 1313 (Fed. Cir. 2000)). Applicant respectfully submits that

5 the prior art does not teach nor suggest a slip containing multiple ledges, that cooperate with multiple inserts having shoulders, wherein, the shoulders are capable of transferring the load from the shoulders to the ledges.

In conclusion, Applicant respectfully submits that the remaining claims, namely claims 1

10 through 6, 12 through 21, 25 through 29, and 35 through 38 are now in a position for allowance. Please note that claims 6 through 11 have been withdrawn due to the restriction requirement. If it would aid in disposition of this matter, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned. Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

15 Respectfully Submitted

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Date

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